

**San Diego Police Historical Association
205 G Street
San Diego, CA 92101
Proposal for a Permanent Police Museum
January 15, 2003**



Prepared by the San Diego Police Historical Association for presentation to
the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee

It is the goal of the San Diego Police Historical Association to form a creative partnership with the City of San Diego so as to properly display the history of San Diego City Law Enforcement.

I. Introduction

The San Diego Police Historical Association is a non-profit group of police officers and citizens dedicated to preserving the history of San Diego city law enforcement.

The San Diego Police Historical Association was founded in 1997 to stop the impending demolition of the Old Police Headquarters at 801 W. Market St. and to open a museum highlighting the history of San Diego City Law Enforcement. The San Diego Police Historical Association is not taxpayer funded nor is it an official entity of the City of San Diego.

In February 2000, the Historical Association opened a small, temporary museum located at 205 G Street. On December 3, 2002, the San Diego Unified Port District voted 5-0 to preserve the Old Police Headquarters for reuse. Despite these successes, there is much work to be done.

A permanent police museum needs to be established that will allow the Historical Association to showcase what is widely regarded as one of the worlds most premier law enforcement agencies.

II. Governing Body

A nine member Board of Directors, each of whom serves a three-year term, governs the Police Historical Association. Most Directors are either active duty or retired SDPD. All Directors are volunteers.

President	Richard J. Carlson SDPD 34 years
Vice President	Gary Yoshonis SDPD (Ret.) 37 years
Secretary	Renee` Hill SDPD 29 years
Treasurer	Blake Cheary SDPD 7 years
Director	Dan Dennis SDPD (Ret.) 29 years
Director	John Graham SDPD 23 years
Director	Ed LaValle SDPD 6 years

Director-Curator

Midge LeClair PhD
UC Professor 19 years

Director-Historian

Steve Willard
SDPD 18 years

III. Board of Commissioners

Commissioners are highly regarded members of the community dedicated to furthering the cause of the Historical Association. Because of their professional accomplishments and status in the community, Commissioners are ambassadors of the Police Historical Association.

Commissioner Richard Bennett

Mr. Bennett is a retired San Diego Police Department Lieutenant who served from 1961 until his retirement in 2002. His 41 years of service is an SDPD record for tenure. While an active duty officer, Mr. Bennett served on a number of committees that shaped the SDPD into "Americas Finest" police department.

Commissioner Steven W. Knight

Mr. Knight is a retired Los Angeles County deputy sheriff with more than 100 years of law enforcement experience in his family. Mr. Knight is also the great nephew of the first United States Congressional Medal of Honor winner. Mr. Knight has recently completed a book on life in Los Angeles in 1853 and is negotiating a screenplay.

Commissioner Vonn Marie May

A renowned historical preservationist, Ms. May is a native San Diegan. Ms. May drafted the nomination for the Old Police Headquarters to become only the 2nd law enforcement facility in California to ever be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Ms. May formerly served in the City's Historical Resource Board and SOHO. She is the only female member of the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Martin Milner

A veteran television and film actor with more than 50 years of experience, Mr. Milner is most famous for his role on TV's Route 66 and on Adam-12 where he played LAPD officer Peter Malloy. Mr. Milner currently resides in Carlsbad and is host of a radio fishing show on the weekends.

Commissioner Edward C. Obayashi Esq.

An active duty San Diego police officer and practicing attorney, Commissioner Obayashi is the only Japanese/American member of the Board of Commissioners. In addition to his duties as a Commissioner, Mr. Obayashi also serves as the Historical Associations legal advisor.

Commissioner Cliff Robertson



An Academy Award winning film actor, Mr. Robertson is a native San Diegan and resides in La Jolla and New York. Mr. Robertson is active in a number of civic causes and is the newest member of the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Dr. Norman “Skip” Sperber



Dr. Sperber is widely regarded as the worlds leading forensic dentist. Dr. Sperber has served as an expert witness in such cases as the Night Stalker and was most recently called upon to assist in victim identification in the attack on the World Trade Center and in the Danielle van Dam murder case.

Commissioner Joseph Wambaugh



Mr. Wambaugh is a former Los Angeles Police Department Detective Sergeant and also the world’s best selling police author. In addition to his writing, Mr. Wambaugh has also served as a technical consultant to many television shows and a number of his books have been made into feature films. Mr. Wambaugh resides in Point Loma.

IV. The Need For A San Diego Police Museum

Most large communities have a police museum dedicated to preserving local law enforcement history. Unfortunately, San Diego is one of the few cities does not have a permanent Police Museum. As a result, the history of San Diego city law enforcement, which dates back almost 500 years, is displayed nowhere and the contributions of its men and women have largely slipped into the passages of time. Today the living legacy of the San Diego Police Department only dates back to 1939. When that officer passes away, the living legacy will date to 1941. We are losing our history and, without a museum to document and display it, the losses will continue.

V. A Police Museum For The Community

As the history of San Diego City law enforcement parallels that of the City of San Diego, a Police Museum represents not only the thousands of its past and present law enforcement officers but also the millions of San Diego residents. The primary mission of the Police Museum is to foster police/community relations. Often, a citizens only contact with police is negative (i.e., receiving a traffic ticket, victim of a crime etc.). In the museum, citizens can interact with police and learn the role police play within the community. For example, citizens may learn that traffic tickets enhance safety and are not a revenue collection scheme. Museums can also dispel myths, such as the fact that ticket quotas are an urban myth and illegal in the State of California.

Museums also provide children an opportunity to learn that police officers help the community and are not bad people who will take them to jail if they don’t do their homework or go to bed on time. This would be especially helpful for children who live in communities that might, historically speaking, be wary of police officers.

Community benefits of a Police Museum:

- A. **Community Relations:** In the 1960's the City of San Diego began opening police storefronts as a way of reaching out to the community and providing the public a way to interact with the police without having to go to police headquarters or a police station. A police museum would extend this community relations initiative.
- B. **Education:** The museum would educate the public as to the role of the San Diego Police Department. The SDPD budget has the largest share of the cities annual budget yet is probably one of the least understood of all city agencies.
- C. **Reduced crime rate in the area surrounding the museum:** A Police Museum would attract not only law-abiding citizens but also other police officers. The increased police presence would have an effect on crime rates in the surrounding area.
- D. **A showcase of San Diego:** The City of San Diego has a right to be proud of their police officers. Despite being the most understaffed police department in the United States (officer to citizen ratio) we boast among the lowest crime rates in the US and we have the highest cancellation (solvability) rate for violent crimes.

VI. Experiencing the San Diego Police Museum

The vision for our museum is to create an experience like no other. We envision an environment that is not only educational but also emotionally stimulating and perhaps, at times, controversial and thought provoking.

The museum would have onsite storage, a memorabilia shop, a workshop for repairs of artifacts and displays, as well as a classroom for educational meetings. The museum would also have office space for its administrative staff.

Approximately one half of the museum exhibit space would feature permanent displays and artifacts. Approximately one fourth of the museum exhibit space would consist of temporary exhibits that are themed in nature. The remaining museum exhibit space would offer an interactive experience.

Permanent exhibits: The museum would be designed so visitors would literally walk, decade by decade, through the evolution of city law enforcement. In addition to photographs and storyboards, there would be accompanying historical artifacts of that era.

Featured Exhibits: This portion of the museum would change on a regular basis. One of the first exhibits planned is "Crime Scene Investigators." The exhibit would be designed by police forensic scientists and would allow visitors to enter the fascinating and yet somewhat mysterious world of high technology and how it is used by law enforcement to routinely solve crimes that would have been, just a decade ago, considered impossible. Due to the popularity of television shows such as CSI and others, it is anticipated this would be a very popular exhibit.

Interactive Exhibits: One of the most controversial aspects of law enforcement is a police officers use of deadly force. The museum would feature a “Hogan’s Alley” type of exhibit where a citizen could undertake the same shoot/don’t shoot scenarios faced by San Diego police officers. In addition to being an exciting exhibit, this would be a very valuable tool in helping citizens understand the some of the split second decisions officers must make on a routine basis. Another interactive exhibit would be a mock crime scene where children would use clues to solve a crime.

The history of San Diego law enforcement has been overwhelmingly positive and good for the population it has served. Having said that, it is one of our core beliefs that museums must present both the positive and negative aspects from with visitors can learn. The museum will present the history of San Diego City law enforcement as it happened, in a fair and objective manner and without prejudice. We believe a visitor will leave our museum enlightened and with a strong, positive attitude towards the men and women who wear a badge in our community.

VII. Artifacts In Storage

Due to the size and security restrictions of the current, temporary museum, the Historical Association has a tremendous number of artifacts that cannot be displayed. Some of the more interesting artifacts are as follows:

Vehicles:

Historic vehicles could be stored outdoors if the museum property was secured by a sturdy fence for after hours security.

1. **1932 Ford Prisoner Transport Vehicle:** This 1-ton vehicle was used by the San Diego Police Department from 1932 until 1945 at which time it was sold to the El Cajon Police Department. It sat abandoned in Ramona from the 1960’s until the Historical Association purchased it in 1998.
2. **1946 Ford Coupe Patrol Car:** This vehicle is owned by a private citizen and is stored in a garage in North Park. The owner has agreed to sell the vehicle to the Historical Association once a permanent museum is secured.
3. **1965 Plymouth Patrol Car:** This vehicle is also owned by a private citizen and is stored in a garage in Mira Mesa. The owner has agreed to sell the vehicle to the Historical Association once a permanent museum is secured.
4. **1965 International Tow Truck:** This vehicle is owned by the Historical Association and is stored in a garage in Santee. The vehicle served the San Diego Police Department from 1965 until 2000.
5. **Bell Jet Ranger Police Helicopter:** The Historical Association has a commitment from Bell to provide the fuselage of a police helicopter for display in the permanent police museum. Visitors would be allowed to sit in the cockpit of the helicopter and learn its role in modern policing.

Weapons:

California Penal Code Section 12020 sub-section (9) allows the San Diego Police Historical Association to possess weapons that would generally be illegal. **ALL WEAPONS DISPLAYED IN THE MUSEUM WOULD BE RENDERED INOPERABLE.** In addition to featuring weapons of historical significance, this display would feature commentary on the physical dangers and legal ramifications of irresponsible firearm ownership.

1. **Thompson Machine Gun:** with its signature “drum” style magazine, both gangsters and law enforcers made the “Tommy Gun” popular in the 1930’s. The one to be displayed by the museum was once used by San Diego Police night robbery detectives.
2. **Guns of the San Ysidro Massacre:** In 1984 James Oliver Huberty walked into a South San Diego McDonalds restaurant and opened fire. The end result was 21 killed and 20 injured. Huberty was eventually shot and killed by an SDPD sniper. His guns, a sawed off shotgun, a .45 handgun and an Uzi 9mm, will be made available to the museum once a permanent location has been secured.
3. **Miscellaneous illegal weapons:** The San Diego County Sheriffs Museum displays confiscated weapons and it is one of their most popular exhibits. The purpose of this display is to educate the public that, while there is a constitutional right to own a firearm, there are limits to what types of weapons may be possessed and what modifications might be made to them.

VIII. Other Law Enforcement Museums

The largest police museums in the US are the Police Hall of Fame in South Florida and the New York City Police Museum. Both museums consist of more than 100,000 square feet in size.

The South Florida museum was created with private funds while the NYPD museum was created with public/private donations spearheaded by then Mayor Rudolph Guiliani.



International Police Hall of Fame



New York City Police Museum

There are a number of Police Museums located within 200 miles of San Diego:

San Diego County Sheriffs Museum:

Located in the Old Town section of San Diego, the SDSO museum is a 6700 square foot museum displaying the history and artifacts of the San Diego County Sheriffs Office and the San Diego County Marshals Office. The SDSO Museum opened in 2001 and was paid for by private donations, the San Diego County Honorary Deputy Sheriffs Association, the County of San Diego and the City of San Diego. There is no representation of San Diego city law enforcement at this museum.

Los Angeles Police Museum:

Located in the Eagle Rock section of Los Angeles (Northeastern Division) the LAPD Museum is set to open in the year 2003. The museum will be located in the 15,000 square foot historic Highland Park police station. Other than the Old San Diego Police Headquarters at 801 W. Market St., the Highland Park station is the only other law enforcement facility in California to occupy a spot on the National Register of Historic Places. The museum is funded by membership, grants and 3.5 million dollars from the City of Los Angeles. The society leases the building from the city of LA for \$1.00 per year.

Los Angeles County Sheriffs Museum:

Located in Whittier California at the Los Angeles County Sheriffs academy, the LA County Museum chronicles the birth and evolution of the worlds largest sheriffs department. The museum is located in a county of Los Angeles building and is staffed by volunteers. The museum is administered by the Sheriffs Relief Association of Los Angeles and was built with private funds. It is staffed with volunteers and is open only on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

IX. Related Local Museum

San Diego Fire Museum:

Located in Downtown San Diego, the Firehouse Museum is a representation of the history of San Diego city firefighting. The Fire Museum opened in 1962 and is located in an old fire station that the society leases from the City of San Diego for \$1.00 per year. In addition to the rent subsidy, the City of San Diego gives the Fire House Museum \$10,000 annually.

X. Museums Planned or Under Construction

El Cajon Police Museum. Conversations and planning have begun on a museum dedicated to preserving the law enforcement history in El Cajon.

XI. Funding The Museum

There are a variety of ways to fund the San Diego Police Museum however it is exceedingly difficult to raise money without a permanent location. Currently the Historical Association relies upon membership and small fundraising events. Because the Association is facing closure of the temporary museum in July 2003, a number of large corporate sponsors have backed away from sponsorship.

The San Diego County Sheriffs Museum is funded by membership, grants, donations, sales of merchandise and corporate sponsors. Even though the Sheriffs Museum doesn't provide space for representation of San Diego City Law Enforcement, in 2001 the City gave the organization \$68,000 for an elevator.

XII. Police VS Sheriffs VS Marshals VS Constables

To the average person, the terms Police Officer, Deputy Sheriff, Marshal and Constable seem synonymous. They are not. All are peace officers however they have very distinctive duties.

POLICE OFFICER: A police officer is responsible for municipal law enforcement in the city he/she is employed by. It is rare to find a police officer working in a jail anywhere in the United States. Additionally, police departments cannot contract their services to other cities. The top priority of a police department is law enforcement.

SHERIFF: By law, each county must have a sheriffs department that provides jail services as a top priority. If there are unincorporated areas, the sheriff is responsible for law enforcement within that area as well. If an incorporated town chooses to have the sheriff as its law enforcement instead of its own police force, it may contract for the sheriff's services.

MARSHALS: There are several different types of marshals. The first are United States Marshals who are federal officers of the court. The second is County Marshals and as of January 1, 2000, San Diego became the last county in the state of California to merge its Marshals office with that off the Sheriff. Previously County Marshals were officers of the County Courts. In addition to providing security at every court, they were also responsible for the enforcement of warrants and summons. Lastly there are City Marshals. While there is no accurate statistic regarding the last City Marshal in California, the last one in San Diego County was in 1937. City Marshals were local officers of the law, however they could also be used for tax collection. The office of the San Diego City Marshal operated off and on from 1850 until 1889. It was replaced by the San Diego Police Department.

CONSTABLES: Constables were used in San Diego until 1889 and were officers for hire.

XII. Potential Locations for a Police Museum

Factors to be considered for potential museum sites:

- 1. Location:** A San Diego Police museum must be located within the San Diego City limits. It must be located in an area synonymous with museums, heavy tourism or other historical attractions.
- 2. Historical Significance:** It would be natural to consider locating a police museum in an old police station or other location with historical police relevance. The Los Angeles Police Historical Society Museum is located in the Old Highland Park station and the San Diego Fire Museum is located in an old fire station.
- 3. Museum Facility:** For functionality, the permanent museum would be a minimum of 6500 square feet (if vehicles are to be stored outdoors and future expansion is possible) to 20,000 square feet (if vehicles are to be housed indoors).
- 4. Security:** Because the San Diego Police Museum houses narcotics paraphernalia, weapons, police badges and uniforms, security must be a top priority. In addition to security measures in place during operating hours, the building must be secure from potential burglars. Security measures would be alarms, environmental design and fortified doors and windows.

Based upon the criteria for a police museum, a relocation committee was formed and conducted a comprehensive examination of the following locations:

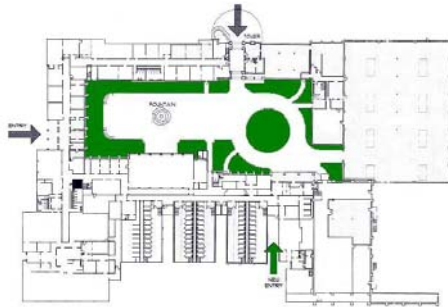
Old Police Headquarters:



The Old Police Headquarters at 801 W. Market Street was home to the San Diego Police Department from May 1939 until January 1987. Since the San Diego Police Department moved from the building, it has sat vacant and has been the subject of a number of plans ranging from complete demolition to complete retention. In 1998 the Old Police Headquarters was added to the National Register of Historic Places making it only the 2nd facility of its type in California to receive such an honor.

PRO'S: The historical significance of the Old Police Headquarters to the San Diego Police Department makes it the number one choice for location of a Police Museum. Additionally, its Downtown location at the front of Seaport Village makes it an ideal tourist destination. It is within walking distance of every form of transportation and a number of hotels.

CONS: Despite being a San Diego Police facility for almost half a century and being located within the city limits, the building is not owned by the City of San Diego. Approximately 85% of the facility was deeded to the San Diego Unified Port District upon the San Diego Police Departments move in 1987. The additional 15% was deeded to the Port in 1994 by then Mayor Susan Golding. Past statements from the Port have indicated they would be willing to consider renting the Historical Association floor space but at a rate ranging from \$10-15 per square foot. Such a scheme is cost prohibitive and therefore should not be considered. Additionally, the Port has not approved any planned reuse for the Old Police Headquarters. Any reuse of the historic structure could be years if not decades from now.



A wildcard factor in consideration of the Old Police Headquarters is the Ports self imposed rules of the Central Park (of which 50% of the Old Police Headquarters sits in on the east side) The Port has stated any operation in the Central Park be park related and it is not expected to turn a profit. As a result, retailers would not be able to operate there nor would there be a rent issue. On the southeast side of the Old Police Headquarters sits the 20,000 square foot Assembly Building. It would make an idea police museum but the Port would have to agree to this scheme.

Liberty Station:



The former Naval Training Center is undergoing a new and exciting redevelopment. Once abandoned barracks and training facilities have been torn down to make way for an urban living environment.

The historic section of NTC has been preserved and designated for reuse as an arts and cultural center.

PRO'S: There are a number of existing buildings in this new district that have not been assigned tenants. These buildings range in size from 12,000 square feet to more than 40,000 square feet in size. As these buildings are to be part of an Arts and Culture District, they are ideally suited for a museum of any type.

CONS: The redevelopment of Liberty Station is behind schedule and may not be complete for several years. The relocation committee has met several times with Liberty Stations Executive Director, Nancy Nigren who has stated she would require the association to pay market rent.

Old Town:



Old Town is located south of interstate 8, east of Pacific Highway, north of Washington Street and west of Taylor Street. Officially established in 1850, Old Town is the oldest part of the City of San Diego and there are a number of historic buildings located there. The majority of what is considered Old Town is now part of the state park system. The San Diego County Sheriffs Museum is located in Old Town.

PRO'S: Old Town is a popular tourist destination in the City of San Diego. There are a number of historic buildings in Old Town directly related to the history of San Diego City law enforcement. These buildings would include Old City Hall, which once served as the office of City Marshal Agoston Haraszthy, the Light-Freeman saloon once owned by Deputy City Marshal Richard Freeman (California's first black lawman) and the Whaley House that was once operated by City Marshal Phillip Crosthwaite. On the north end of Old Town is the former house of City Marshal James McCoy.

CONS: All of the above listed buildings are either owned by the state, the county or private interests. There are no available buildings in Old Town that are large enough to house a police museum.

Balboa Park:



Originally created as "City Park" in 1868, the 1400-acre Balboa Park is widely regarded as a crown jewel of the City of San Diego. Balboa Park is home to a number of popular museums and cultural attractions.

PRO'S: Balboa Park is a popular tourist destination in the City of San Diego. There is a historical building (Fire Alarm Building) in the park that is directly related to the history of San Diego City emergency services. The park is fed by major public transportation and there are several

buildings that are either under utilized by current tenants, are occupied by tenants without a lease entitling them to be there or are being occupied by city staff who could be relocated elsewhere.

CONS: There are no large buildings in Balboa Park immediately available for occupancy by the San Diego Police Museum.

XIII. New Construction VS An Existing Building

PRO'S: There are advantages to building a police museum through new construction. The first is a museum could be custom built to exact specifications. The other advantage is new construction allows some flexibility over where the museum would be located.

CONS: New construction is expensive. Preliminary cost estimates range from four to six million dollars NOT including land purchase. There is also a significant permit and environmental review process that would need to be completed.

XIV. Diversity

The San Diego Police Historical Association is committed to the City of San Diego's Diversity program. The Association has is an annual participant in the MLK parade, the Gay Pride Parade as well as the St. Patrick's Day Parade. The Association has sponsored exhibits to highlight the history of Black police officers and is currently designing one of female law enforcement officers.

The Association is deeply committed to diversity because San Diego city law enforcement has represented diversity literally since its founding. The first law enforcers of our area were Native Americans who enforced law through tribal custom. When San Diego was placed under Spanish rule, an all Hispanic police force protected the citizenry. As there is not a museum to display these facts, these remarkable achievements are destined to be forever lost to history.

Other key facts:

- The San Diego City Marshals Office employed a Black officer a full decade before President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. (Richard Freeman 1850)
- Despite a law (at the time) prohibiting Native Americans from testifying against whites, the San Diego Police Department was led by a Cherokee. (Edward "Ned" Bushyhead 1899-1903)
- The San Diego Police Department employed women years before they were given the constitutional right to vote. (Matron Rose Longacre 1910, Detective E. Belle Robinson 1913 Policewoman Lucille Jeardue 1917.)
- By 1938 the San Diego Police Department had employed women, a Black detective, a Black sergeant, a Chinese patrolman and a Native American Police Chief. These officers were given full police responsibilities as well as pay. If they had sought employment in the United States military, they would only be allowed to serve as stewards if at all.
- The San Diego Police Department was one of the first police agencies in the United States to allow women to perform uniformed patrol duties. (1973)
- The San Diego Police Department was one of the first departments in the United States to acknowledge openly gay police officers.

XV. Emergency Services Memorial

Once the museum is established, the Association will design and construct an Emergency Services Memorial dedicated to fallen law enforcement officers, firefighters, lifeguards and paramedics. There is currently not a memorial recognizing these heroes. Many members of the public are not aware that lifeguards were part of the SDPD until 1947 or that SDPD officers provided paramedic services until 1982. This memorial will become part of the permanent police museum.

XVI. Conclusion

Amazing facts that have been lost to time:

- Despite being founded as a city in 1769, San Diego was stripped of its town status on more than one occasion causing it to cease to exist. The first time was in 1836 when it was made a suburb of Los Angeles. The second time was when the city went bankrupt in 1852 and the state repealed its charter.
- The first City Marshal of San Diego was a Hungarian Count and the richest immigrant to America in the 1800's. He hired California's first black lawman and later went on to found the California wine industry with his own creation, Zinfandel.
- The first man booked into the San Diego city jail was a 25 year old named Roy Bean. Bean quickly escaped and fled to Los Angeles. He later opened a courtroom and saloon in Langford Texas where he served as a hanging judge.
- During the 1870's and 1880's, San Diego averaged a murder a day and was considered one of the most violent towns in North America.
- Wyatt Earp lived in San Diego between 1885 and 1891. Despite the legend of him being a lawman and upstanding individual, Earp controlled most of the gambling interests in town and once told a Deputy City Marshal, "You will be stepping in your coffin the next time you come in my saloon."
- Between 1913 and 1915, San Diego experienced civil unrest so severe its police officers were forced to work 18 hours a day, 7 days a week. As a result more than 1/4 of the department resigned.
- During WWII the population of the city doubled while staffing of the police department was cut by 1/3. Of the 301 officers of the SDPD, 91 were drafted into military service. Only one did not return yet he died a highly decorated hero in combat.

These are just a few facts in an amazing story that can be told about law enforcement in San Diego. Unfortunately, there is no place to tell such a story. As we have noted and emphasized, San Diego desperately needs a permanent police museum.